

MT. TOM

AND MT. TOM RAILROAD



VIEWS ON AND ABOUT
MT. TOM
AND OF MT. TOM RAILROAD

PUBLISHED BY
HOLYOKE
STREET RAILWAY COMPANY
HOLYOKE, MASS.

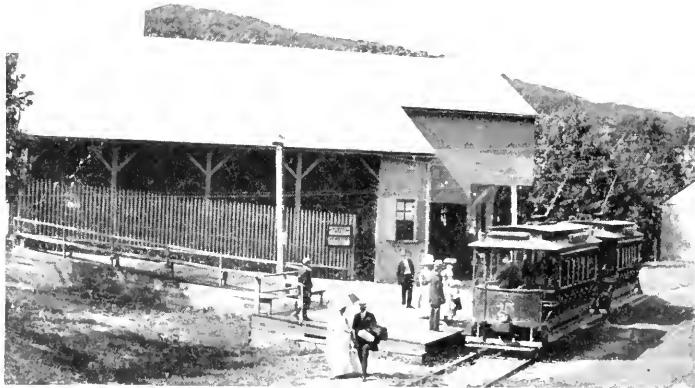
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One of Many Beautiful Mt. Tom Views



Mt. Tom Summit House from the West - Courtesy of Deloitte Pub. Co.

T H E M O U N T A I N

I

N Massachusetts, near the cities of Holyoke and Northampton, close by "the lovely vale of the sweetest stream that flows, the winding and willowy-fringed Connecticut," stands Mt. Tom. It is the highest peak of the Mt. Tom range. It dominates the beautiful and picturesque section of country of which it is the central figure. From the south it seems solid, bold and defiant against the sky, a dome-shaped monument of trap-rock and sandstone suggestive of the times when Nature was struggling to rescue from the great prehistoric ocean of ice and water the fair country of which it is a part, and to close the volcanoes that were active about its base. For lovers of natural scenery Mt. Tom has a perfect location, with the peculiarity of being high above the general level of the country near it.

There is a tradition that in 1650 surveying parties, headed by Rowland Thomas and Elizur Holyoke, each ascended the two mountains on their lines of survey and named them Mt. Tom and Mt. Holyoke respectively.

T H E S U M M I T

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HE summit of Mt. Tom was not easily accessible until the construction of the Mt. Tom Railroad in the year 1897. Now, the street cars of Holyoke (which connect with the Springfield, Northampton, Westfield and Amherst systems of street cars, and with the Boston & Maine and N. Y., N. H. & Hartford railroads) run to the lower station of the Mt. Tom Railroad, and in less than ten minutes afterwards the mountain cars deliver their passengers on the summit. The Mt. Tom Railroad is a cable-trolley-electric, modern mountain railway. The cars are models of taste and finish, excelling in size, proportions and beauty all mountain cars in this country. The electric power is furnished from a power house five miles away. Each car is equipped with electric brakes, also with a powerful automatic grip-brake (which is governed by a regulator) which causes heavy, strong jaws to grip a safety third-rail of the track whenever the wheels exceed a certain speed.

The strong, steel cable, made of 120 wires, tested to many times the required strength, passes over large sheaves at the summit.



Holyoke and Connecticut River, from Mt. Tom

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Ingenious Turnout, Mt. Tom Railway

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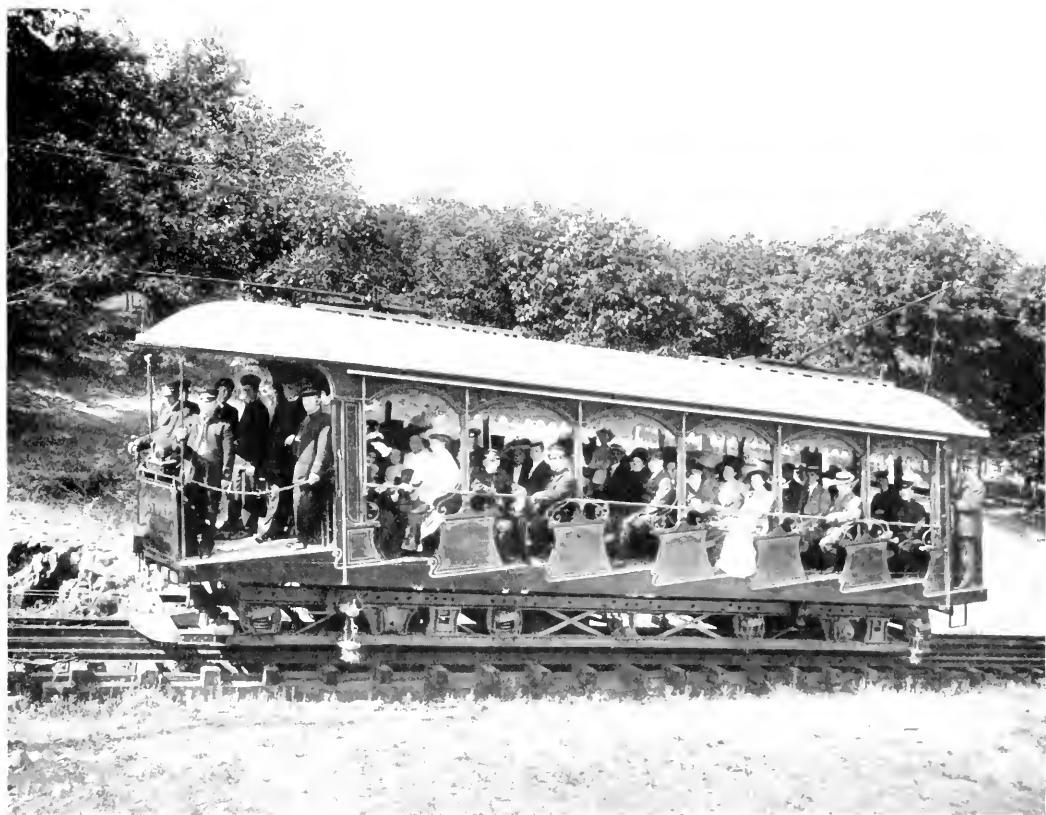
Upper Station, Mt. Tom Railway

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Approaching the Summit

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One of the Cable-Electric Cars, Mt. Tom Railway

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Mountain Park Cafe

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ESIDES these brakes, there is a brake upon the cable at the top of the incline, also the usual electric car hand-brakes on each car. The "turn-out," half way up the mountain, is an ingenious arrangement for allowing cable-connected cars to be used on a single-track, standard-gauge railroad. The roadbed is of trap-rock, and the construction is strong and substantial in every way. The cars move up the rocky slope by a grade so easy as not to suggest even the fear of giddiness to the most timid. The maximum grade is but 21 per cent.

The cars are connected with each other by a telephone system which can be used when cars are in motion or when still. The upper and lower stations are also connected by a separate telephone system.

As the car approaches the summit the view of the surrounding country breaks suddenly upon the gaze of visitors. The short walk from the upper station of the railroad to the Summit House is a pleasant one, and visitors linger on the way to observe many points of interest.

THE SUMMIT HOUSE

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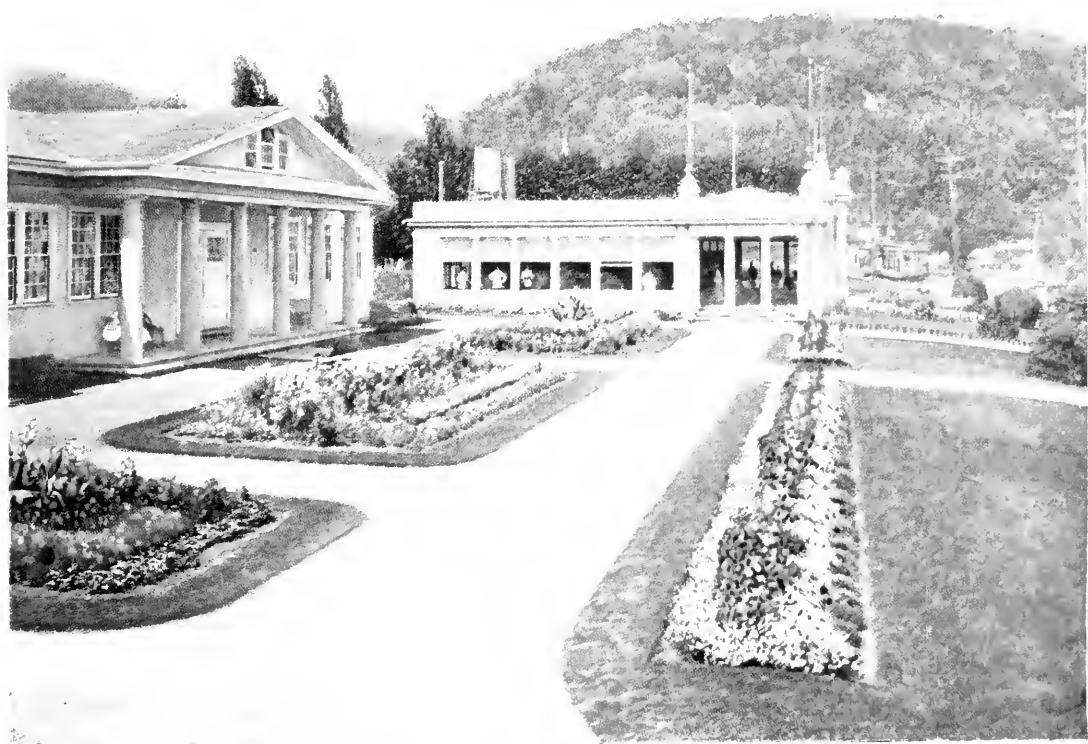
HE Summit House is a large, solidly built structure, 76 feet wide by 104 feet long, four stories high. Wide piazzas surround two stories and the upper story is a large observation room (48 x 80 feet), surrounded by windows of polished plate glass. This observation room is furnished with numerous telescopes for the free use of visitors. Maps of the United States Topographical Survey show the country with all the details of water, relief and culture, on a scale of about one mile to the inch, from Boston Bay to the Hudson River, and from Long Island Sound northerly into Vermont and New Hampshire.

In the lower story is a spacious dining room where excellent meals are served at all times. Visitors will be sure of good service and an excellent cuisine. There is also a lunch-counter, and a beautiful rustic pavilion for those who bring their own lunches, but the house is not arranged for the accommodation of guests over night. A long-distance telephone connects with the outside world.



Easthampton and Beyond, from Mt. Tom

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Cafe and Assembly Pavilion, Mountain Park

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T H E V I E W

THE view from the summit of Mt. Tom is the prominent feature, as it is the most diversified and beautiful of any mountain view in the world. To some it suggests the Drachenfels on the Rhine, and to others Stirling Castle, but comparisons are not necessary, so much is true, and more, that in forty minutes from Holyoke one may sit above the din and heat of a summer day, in the world and yet apart from it, with as fine a view as the earth affords, satisfied by the variety presented.

“Nature is saturated with beauty” writes a prominent author, and those whose perceptive powers are not at fault cannot but appreciate the beauty of Nature in the splendid panorama that surrounds Mt. Tom. In late afternoon, when the mist and light make the glory of a summer sunset, the feeling uppermost is one of enjoyment and admiration, and one forgets himself in the delights of a bird’s existence, for we must look from a great height to realize, in a flood of sensations, that the poetry of air is liberty.

NATURE dips her pencil in many colors to tint the landscape from April to November. It is a long and varying scale, from the delicate tint of the first leaves of the birches to the brilliant colors of the fall maples. Each day has its peculiar beauties. The intermittent shadows and sunlights of a day in spring, chasing each other across fields and mountains, tint a picture that art's pencils and pigments cannot equal. A glimpse of this picturesque portion of our planet makes the excitement and annoyances of business and social life appear unreal and ridiculous. The sense of proportion, gained here, is one of the signs of sanity and health. "Nature is ready to mother us all if we will only let her. The quietude of her heights is medicine for the fret and fever of life."

One visitor has testified:—

"Upon the summit of Mt. Tom
I sit and dream. The moments go
Like blessed messengers of rest,
And life is good, and life is best.
The sun is setting. By his glow
The fairy world is amber-kissed.
The upper world's a crimson mist,
And, 'twixt the two, my dream-slips
Come to old Mt. Tom."

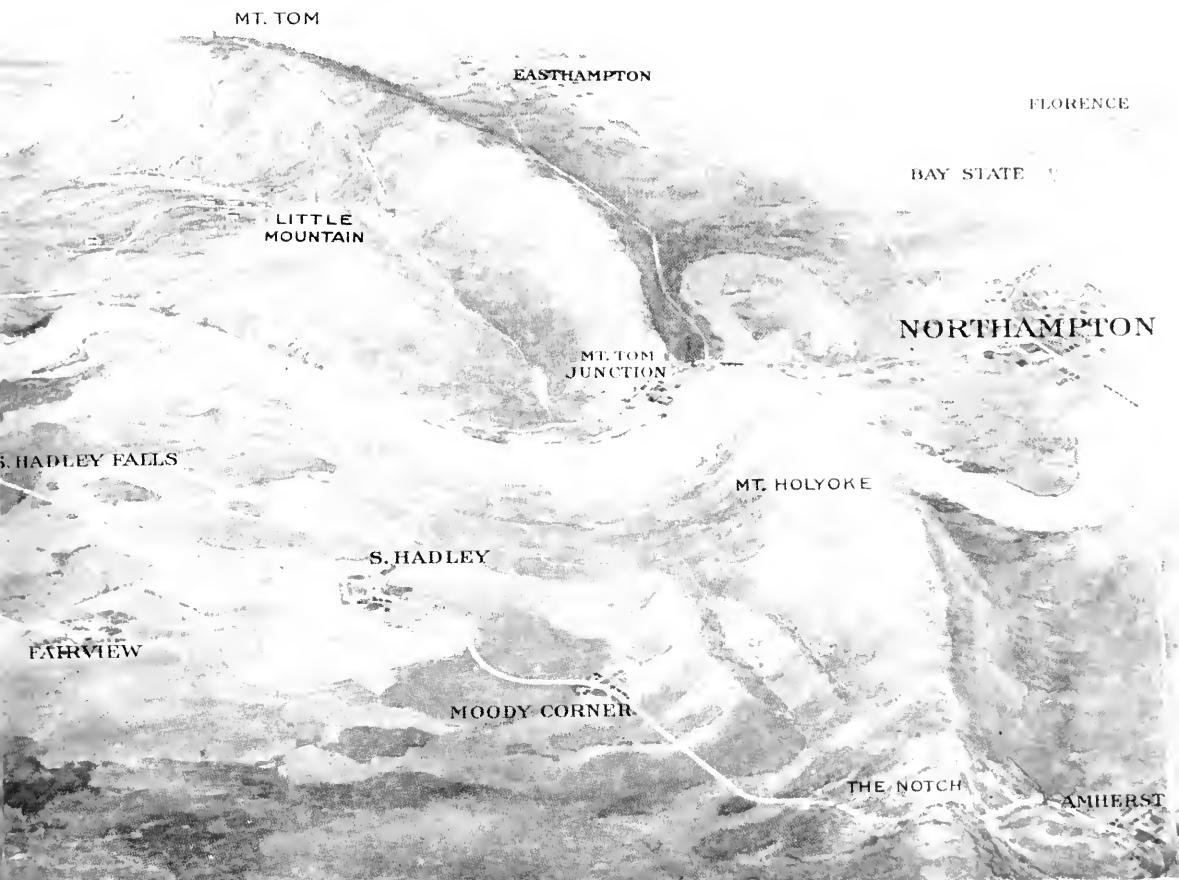


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Bird's-Eye View of Mt. Tom



Mt. Tom and Mountain F



Surrounding Country



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From Cedar Knob Tower

T

HE view from Mt. Tom is one of infinite variety. It is a rare pastime to watch the sky from the piazzas, or from some cozy nook of the palisaded trap-rock, and see the glorious cloud-pictures, with their ever-varying effects, on favorable days for vapory formations.

Afar off (fifty-one miles) to the north, in the Granite State, is the massive bulk and impressive outlines of Monadnock (3,186 feet) with its rock-armored peak, a kingly mountain, from this distance a great softened shadow against the sky. To the northwest is "Haystack," near Wilmington, Vt., and Stratton Mountain, miles beyond "Haystack." On a very clear day Mt. Ascutney, Vt. (3,228 feet), eighty-five miles distant, can be seen through the most powerful telescope. To the east is Wachusett (2,108 feet), sixteen miles northerly of Worcester. To the west is Greylock, in Berkshire (3,535 feet), the highest land in Massachusetts. Near Greylock is the tunnelled Hoosac Mountain (2,480 feet), and farther to the north is Marlboro Mountain.

NEARER is Bald Mountain (1,690 feet), near Shelburne Falls, and Mt. Grace (1,628 feet), near Warwick, and Mt. Tobey (1,275 feet). Near Mt. Tom (1,218 feet) are Mt. Holyoke (984 feet) and Norwottuck (1,115 feet). Northerly, beyond the Sugar Loaf Mountains, is Greenfield, a typical New England shire-town.

Five miles away is Northampton, with the buildings of Smith College in plain view; also the state asylum for the insane. Easterly, less than four miles away, is South Hadley, where Mary Lyon, October 3, 1836, founded Mt. Holyoke College. The brownstone tower, with large clock-dials, is on the Administration Building. It doesn't seem to be three and one-half miles to the city-hall tower of Holyoke, the great paper-making city of this country. A leading papermaker of Holyoke once issued a standing challenge to "All England" to produce better paper than is made at Holyoke. Beyond is Chicopee and Chicopee Falls, producers of cotton cloth and automobiles.



Looking South from Mt. Tom

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A Lily Pond, Mountain Park

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SOUTHERLY, on a tower of the United States Armory at Springfield, floats the flag of our country. On clear days, nearly thirty-five miles to the south, the golden dome of the Connecticut State Capitol of Hartford can be plainly seen. West of the Mt. Tom range is Westfield, whose whips are snapped and cigars smoked all over the country. Near the foot of the mountain lies Easthampton, where Samuel Williston devoted some of the profits of his button manufactory to the building and endowment of Williston Seminary. To the south is Suffield Institute and to the east is the Wesleyan Seminary, at Wilbraham. It is doubtful if there is another section in New England where so many educational institutions can be seen from one summit. To the northeast is Amherst, with its two colleges.

"The beauty and the majesty of earth
Spread wide beneath. . . There, as thou standest,
The haunts of men below thee, and around,
The mountain summits, thy expanding heart
Shall feel a-kindred with that loftier world
To which thou art translated, and partake
The enlargement of thy vision."

O NE can see the Deerfield of Indian history, and Hadley, where the Cromwellian regicides led the settlers against an Indian attack, and where "fighting Joe Hooker" was born. Peru church is literally nearer the heavens than any other church in Massachusetts, yet Blanford's steeple is ambitious. Goshen, Haydenville, Williamsburg, Leyden, Shutesbury, Pelham, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Ludlow, Granby, Belchertown, Longmeadow, Enfield, Thorndike, Thompsonville, Rockville, Somers, Feeding Hills, West Springfield, Mittineague, East Hartland, Tolland, Middlefield, Westhampton, Southampton, Florence, Leeds, and Bay State are in view, besides many other places which may be pointed out to visitors by the person in charge of the observation hall.

"A thousand beauties never seen before
Glide with sweet surprises into my soul.
Here sorrow, with a dimness o'er her face,
Might be beguiled to smiles —almost forget
Her sufferings, and in Nature's living book
Read characters so lovely, that her heart
Would, as it blessed them, feel a rising swell
Almost like joy. An earthly paradise."



Looking Up the Incline



Mt. Tom from the East



Going through Rock Cut, Mt. Tom Railway

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Looking South from Lower Station



Near the "Zoo," Mountain Park



Dining Room, Summit House, Mt. Tom

M

T. TOM is the geologist's paradise. The summit rock shows distinctly the striae or scratches of the debris of the glaciers or ocean of ice that once covered this whole country. Granite boulders from afar north found resting places along the mountain's side; a fine specimen may be found on "Little Mountain," and a "bird-track" of huge size can be seen in a sandstone slab in front of the Summit House, brought thither from Mountain Park.

The electric carfare from Holyoke postoffice to the foot of Mt. Tom is 5 cents. The fare on the Mt. Tom Railroad is 25 cents for the round trip, which includes free use of grounds, pavilion, use of telescopes, etc. Fares to summit of Mt. Tom and return, on electric railway, are as follows: Springfield, round trip, 55 cents; Westfield, 65 cents; Northampton, 45 cents; Amherst, 65 cents; Easthampton, 45 cents; Williamsburg, 55 cents; Chicopee, 45 cents; Chicopee Falls, 45 cents. A fine automobile road leads from the main auto thoroughfare, up the Connecticut Valley to Mountain Park where cars may be taken to the foot of the Mt. Tom Railroad.

MOUNTAIN PARK

C

ARS to Mt. Tom pass through "Mountain Park," probably the largest street railway park in the world, being owned by the Holyoke Street Railway Company and comprising more than 400 acres. This park extends from the base of Mt. Tom to the Connecticut River, and its extensive natural beauties have been added to by carefully planned improvements without detracting from the charms of its wildness. Within its limits there has been uncovered a large tract of sandstone, bearing footprints made thousands of years ago, outlasting every work of man.

During summer seasons, in the Mountain Park Casino (which has a seating capacity of 2,500), musical comedies and operas are daily presented, afternoons and evenings. Besides pleasant walks, observation towers and tables for picnic parties, there are flowers in profusion, a deer park and zoo. Also a restaurant building, pavilion for dancing, merry-go-round, photograph gallery, Y. W. C. A. cottage for women and children, and the lower station of the Mt. Tom Railroad.



Another View of the Summit House



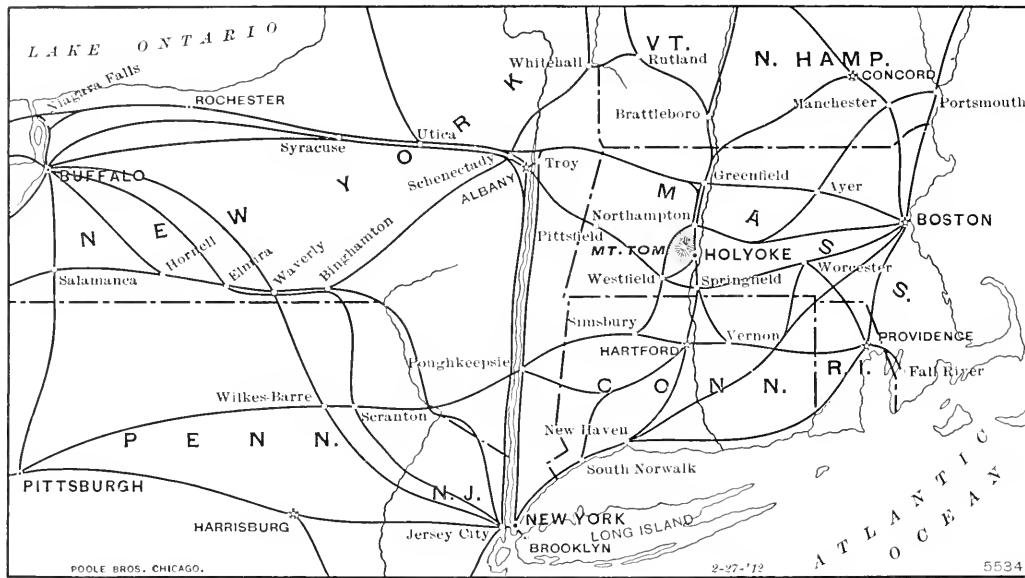
Rustic Lunch Pavilion near Summit House



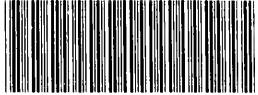
Mountain Park and Connecticut River, from Mt. Tom



Mt. Tom from Mountain Park



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